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Keynote Address at 1956 Montana State Democratic Convention

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Montana State Democratic Convention -- June 27, 1956

FELLOW DEMOCRATS & MONTANANS --

The main purpose of this gathering here in Helena is primarily a convention to draw up a platform to win with in November. It is also necessary to give some thought to the party's record. Today, I want to talk about the party's record, more specifically the record of the 84th Congress. I feel that it is a good record.

First of all, I want to talk about ~~this record~~, the accomplishments and the failures of the 84th Congress, particularly as they affect the State of Montana. The 84th Congress was good to the people of Montana. There were disappointments and defeats, and we had our ups and downs.

In the past two years Congress has made considerable progress in behalf of America's working men and women. In July of 1955, the Democratic 84th Congress raised the minimum wage from 75 cents to one dollar an hour. The Democrats have long recognized the need for this increase because 8 million American families still have incomes below \$2,000 a year as established by a June 1956 survey. This is the first increase in the minimum wage since 1949, a victory for the low-income families won over the opposition of President Eisenhower.

The Social Security program was liberalized to provide benefits to women beginning at age 62 and to disabled persons at age 50, instead of 65, extending coverage to a number of professional groups, as well as increasing grants to states for aid to needy, blind and to dependent children. This was the first major change in the program since it was established.

One of the greatest achievements of this past session was the enactment of a \$33.4 billion Highway Bill authorizing the construction of a 13-year highway construction program. This new program will be of considerable assistance in improving and rebuilding the interstate highway system in Montana, under the new Federal 90 percent share of the cost ratio on the completion of the 41,000-mile interstate system. In addition this new program increases regular aid for State highways through 1959.

As many of you here today know, an additional 1,000 miles were added to the total interstate highway mileage. The distinguished ~~senior~~ senator from our great state, Jim Murray and the very able representative from Montana's 1st District, Lee Metcalf and I introduced legislation to bring U. S. Highway #2 into the interstate system. The additional mileage added to the program would have taken care of a large part of Highway #2 which extends from Puget Sound through Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, however the Bureau of Public Roads has not made the necessary designation to bring this highway into the interstate system at this time. We feel strongly that the route of U. S. Highway #2 has become extremely important in recent years as a service to the growing communities and industries along the Canadian-United States frontier and because of the strategic role this northern frontier is playing in the defense of the Nation.

New housing legislation authorizes a 2 year program of public housing construction at a rate of 35,000 units per year; increasing FHA insurance authorization and additional military housing. Of particular interest to the individual families is the extension of the program authorizing the FHA home repair and modernization program. This is a very sound and proven program, dating back 20 years. Increases have been allowed in the maximum amounts of insurable loans and terms. It was unfortunate indeed that agreement could not be reached relative to the provision of housing for the aged and elder citizens of the Nation. A program of this nature should be foremost among the Democratic plans next year.

The 84th Congress under Democratic leadership made one of the finest records in Congressional history, enacting a program of progressive humane legislation defying the reactionary efforts of the Republican Administration. I have mentioned only a few of the major programs benefiting the American people, but today I want to discuss the accomplishments that directly concern Montana and its inhabitants.

As each session of Congress draws to a close, one always asks the question, how did we fare, as a state, in the numerous appropriation bills. I think Montana did rather well this year.

One of the major accomplishments was an appropriation of \$500,000 to begin construction of a second-power plant at Fort Peck dam. This plant, when completed by the Corps of Army Engineers, will add 80,000 kilowatts to the existing 85,000

kilowatt plant now in operation. The construction of this new plant after many years of repeated appeals to the Army Engineers will mean much to relieve the power shortage in eastern Montana and the Northwest.

Another success the Democratic delegation was able to accomplish during 1956 was the authorization and appropriation of funds for the construction of a new warm-water fish hatchery at Miles City. During the past year the Departmental authorities along with local residents came to the realization that the fish hatchery facilities now in operation at Miles City were obsolete and had reached the point of being almost beyond repair. In order to meet the fish-stocking needs of the Northwest it was imperative to have a new ~~have a new~~ hatchery soon. Companion legislation authorizing the construction of this hatchery was introduced by Senator Murray, Lee Metcalf and myself. This authorization was approved and we were able to secure an appropriation of \$359,000 in the final days of the 2nd Session to allow the Fish & Wildlife Service to construct this new facility during the current fiscal year. This new hatchery at Miles City will produce approximately 10 million bass, blue gill, pike and catfish annually, according to Departmental estimates.

The Helena Valley Unit received an additional \$1,750,000 appropriation, for a total of \$4,000,000 to begin construction of the dam and reservoir. The immediate construction has been held up because of an additional supplemental water contract

requirement not included in the original negotiations with the Bureau of Reclamation. However I am pleased to note that supplemental water contract negotiations with the City of Helena are progressing favorably and I certainly hope that construction of this vital project can be gotten underway in the very near future.

Another success for the public works program in the State was the appropriation of \$225,000 for the Bitterroot Irrigation District in Western Montana, which will permit rehabilitation and repair work and thus reduce farmers' maintenance costs and assure the people of the Bitterroot a reasonable uninterrupted delivery of irrigation water. Lee Metcalf is to be commended for bringing the necessity of these funds to the attention of the appropriate Committees of Congress so funds could be appropriated and the rehabilitation work could be started in the current fiscal year.

A number of other State projects received construction funds during the past session of Congress. The corps of Army Engineers has an initial appropriation of \$200,000 for construction work on the flood control project at Billings. Clean-up work on Tiber Dam and Reservoir will be completed this year and the dam will be operated for the first full year in fiscal year 1957.

Public Law 685 of the 84th Congress will mean a great deal to many areas of the State. This new law amends the small projects authority of the 1950 Flood Control Act, by raising

the limitation on Federal expenditure for small flood control projects from \$150,000 to \$400,000. The flood control project at West Glendive is one of the first small projects to benefit from this new law. This will allow the Army Engineers to proceed with the construction of the West Glendive flood control project, waiving the requirement for local contribution of all construction costs over and above the former Federal cost limitation of \$150,000. This will save the West Glendive folks approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000. It is my hope that other flood control projects in the State will benefit from this new provision, relieving local interests of excessive construction costs.

In this age of atomic and hydrogen bombs and weapons, and supersonic aircraft, the State of Montana is becoming increasingly important in its strategic position along the northern frontier and because of Montana's great resources and industrial potential. Montana has two of the Nation's greatest bastions of defense, the Malmstrom Air Base at Great Falls, an important link in the Strategic Air Command and the new Air Defense Command base at Glasgow, now under construction. It is the duty of Congress to see that these bases receive adequate funds to accelerate construction and to maintain these air bases with adequate operating and personnel facilities. A Democratic Congress has assured these things during the past two years and will continue to do so in the years to come.

A new strategic minerals purchase program will give a new shot-in-the-arm for our mining industry and mining communities. In addition to authorizing this program, Congress appropriated \$21 million to implement this minerals purchase program which will permit some 250 persons to stay on the payroll of fluorspar companies at Hamilton and Darby and the tungsten operation at Dillon.

The Milk River mosquito control program was bolstered by increased allocations by the Department of Agriculture and the Public Health Service. This research project will contribute immensely to the combating of similar pestilences in other parts of the United States.

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One of the major accomplishments of the past year was the issuance of the executive decision to rescind the order to transform the 96th Infantry Reserve Division into a maneuver area command. Reservists of Montana, Idaho, Utah and Arizona have now been assured that the 96th Division will be maintained at its full and active strength. An unfavorable decision would have doomed the entire Army Reserve program in Montana, particularly the reserve armory construction program which has progressed so well in the past several months. The Department of the Army has approved Army Reserve Training Center sites at Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glasgow, Great Falls, Havre, Livingston and Polson. These designations are for planning purposes only. Final departmental approval of the projects and requests

for construction funds for the necessary 100-man and 200-man armories cannot be initiated until the minimum strength of troop program units meet the departmental requirements.

Over the past several years I have become extremely concerned over the welfare of America's first citizens, the Indians. The deplorable and unfortunate conditions which exist among some of the Indian reservations and settlements in the State such as Hill 57 in Great Falls ^{are deplorable,} In this age of great social progress the economy and welfare of our Indian populace has fallen behind, they have not progressed with the vast majority of our society. Montana's Democratic delegation has been persistent in its search for assistance for these people, however the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been firm in its denial of additional aid to the destitute Indians in Montana, responsibility that rightfully rests upon the shoulders of the Federal Government. It was unfortunate that legislation providing for relief of depressed areas, including Indian tribes, did not pass before adjournment of Congress. However, Congress did enact legislation providing for vocational training for Indians between the ages of 18 and 35 to help them obtain employment. We Democrats should not rest until we can provide a better existence for our Indians.

I think that you will agree that the record of the Democratic 84th Congress is good, but again I say there were disappointments. The greatest disappointments were in the areas of army economy and development of natural resources.

Between 1954 and 1955, United States farmers experienced the sharpest, 11 percent decline, in take-home pay in any single year in history, except 1921. Moreover, farm income in the first three months of 1956 ran 10 percent lower than the same months of 1955. Statistical data indicates that the plight of the farmer has lessened slightly in the past several months, but I doubt that the farmers in drought stricken eastern Montana will be claiming any great increase in their prosperity this year.

When the President vetoed the farm bill this year which would have restored 90 percent price supports, his action cost the farmers \$3.1 billion.

The Administration takes a great deal of credit for the soil bank, but they have conveniently overlooked the fact that in 1955 the Administration opposed soil bank legislation introduced by the members of the Democratic Party.

The 1955 farm income fell \$1 billion according to a Department of Agriculture report made earlier this year. At the same time the income of the non-farm segment of the Nation's economy was rising above 1954 levels.

The Department said the income of the Nation's farm population, from all sources last year totaled a little more than \$19 billion for an individual average of \$860. This compared with just under \$20 billion received in 1954 for an individual average of \$913.

The nonfarm population was said to have received a total income of \$275 billion last year for an individual average of \$1,922--more than double the farm average. The previous year the nonfarm total was \$258 billion for an individual average of \$1,837.

These figures plainly show that the individual income of nonfarm people rose approximately \$85, while the individual farmer's income dropped approximately \$53.

In the midst of widespread prosperity which we hear so much about, farm families are having forced upon them the heavy hand of poverty. While farmers total net income is way down, corporation profits continue to go up as do dividends and interest.

Despite the determined opposition of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Republican Administration the Democratic 84th Congress did manage to enact a number of bills beneficial to the farm populace. I am proud to say that Senator Murray, Lee Metcalf and I fought for these measures which would bring some assistance to the American farmer.

The Sugar Act was amended and extended until 1960, allowing the domestic producers of beets and sugar cane a more equitable share of increased market demands. The excise tax on gasoline and oil used only in farm machinery was removed.

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program was extended until 1959, increasing the authorized emergency loan program by \$50 million.

A bill was passed again this year expanding quotas for durum wheat class II for the 1956 crop, co-sponsored by Montana's Democratic delegation in Washington.

In order to return a semblance of full parity to the farmers' economy, it will be necessary to return a Democratic president and a Democratic Congress to Washington.

In the area of natural resources the Republican Administration has a record of giveaways, favoritism and private utility preference.

The United States has a marvelous system of preservation of our fish and wildlife refuges, but another four years of the present administration would likely open up these refuges to extensive exploitation .

Under the present administration wildlife refuges have been exploited. For instance, five times as many oil leases on wildlife refuges have been granted in 2½ years as had been granted in the previous 33 years. In brief the nation's fish and wildlife program has been turned over to politics and administrative chaos.

The giveaway of our natural power resources was symbolized by the rejection of ^{one of} the Federal development of the Nation's few remaining natural damsites, Hells Canyon. This project is being abandoned in favor of three small dams, with less power and without multi-purpose benefits and low cost power

a development beneficial only to the private utilities.

The Administration has failed to make any new starts on multi-purpose power projects. It would appear they are dragging their feet in promoting negotiations with Canada relative to the Libby Dam site, a multi-purpose project they profess to favor. I feel that entirely too little consideration has been given by the Department of the Interior to Lee Metcalf's fine recommendation that a means to get this project rolling would be the construction of a low Libby Dam as preliminary to the construction of the authorized high dam when the international negotiations are settled.

The most grievous defeat for the people of Montana during this session was the Presidential veto of the resolution which would have authorized payment of \$5 million to the Crow Indians for Yellowtail Dam land and right-of-way, and thus cleared away the last obstacle to construction of this multi-purpose project which will mean so much to the industry and growth of the State.

I firmly feel that President Eisenhower was ill-advised when he vetoed this resolution--a resolution with substantiating evidence on every point, a means of treating a group of Indians equitably, which is so seldom done, and a resolution approved by Congress, Montana's Governor, and local interests. I shall do all within my power to see that this matter is settled at the earliest opportunity after Congress reconvenes in January, in a manner safeguarding the interests of all concerned.

In conclusion, I want to say again, that the record of the 84th Congress, as it affects Montana, is good. With a solid Democratic delegation from Montana in Washington ~~in 1915/16~~ ~~1916/17~~, with a Democrat in the White House and backed by a strong Democratic administration in Montana, the record of the 85th Congress can be better, with fewer disappointments.

MONTANA STATE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

SPEECH OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

June 27, 1956

I PLEDGES AND HEDGES OF 1952 CAMPAIGN

1. a Sound Dollar
- b Cost of Living
- c Debt Limit
- d Tax Reduction
2. Stronger Defense
3. Farm Parity
4. Natural Resources
 - a Hungry Horse Story
 - b Dixon Yates
 - c Yellowtail - Hells Canyon
5. Social Security
6. Tidelands

II MONTANA

III FOREIGN POLICY

The main purpose of this gathering here in Helena is primarily a convention to draw up a platform to win with in November. It is also necessary to give some thought to the party's record. Today, I want to talk about the Democratic Party's record, more specifically the record of the 84th Congress. It is a good record.

First of all, I want to mention the accomplishments and the failures of the 84th Congress, particularly as they affect the State of Montana. The 84th Congress, Democratic controlled, was good to the people of Montana. There were disappointments and defeats, and we had our ups and downs.

In the past two years Congress has made considerable progress in behalf of America's working men and women. In July of 1955, the Democratic 84th Congress raised the minimum wage from 75 cents to one dollar an hour. The Democrats have long recognized the need for this increase because 8 million American families still have incomes below \$2,000 a year as established by a June 1956 survey. This is the first increase in the minimum wage since 1949, a victory for the low-income families won over the opposition of President Eisenhower.

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kilowatt plant now in operation. The construction of this new plant after many years of repeated appeals to the Army Engineers will mean much to relieve the power shortage in eastern Montana and the Northwest.

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Senator Murray is to be highly commended for his very active part in sponsoring and working for the enactment of the Health Amendments Act of 1956. This new law is a large step in the stimulation of the training of more nurses and public-health personnel. In the first year the program is expected to train approximately 800 registered nurses. At last there has been a realization that we need a program to combat the shortage of nurses which plagues the Nation. This program is another instance of the fine work Senator Murray is doing as Senior member of the Senate Committee on Labor and Welfare.

Over the past several years the three M's have become extremely concerned over the welfare of America's first citizens, the Indians. The depressing and unfortunate conditions which exist among some of the Indian reservations and settlements in the State such as Hill 57 in Great Falls are deplorable. In this age of great social progress the economy and welfare of our Indian populace has fallen behind and they have not progressed with the vast majority of our society. Montana's Democratic delegation has been persistent in its efforts for assistance for our fellow-citizens, both on and off the reservation. However, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been firm in its denial of additional aid to the destitute Indians in Montana, a responsibility that rightfully rests upon the shoulders of the Federal Government and not on the State and the Counties. It was unfortunate that legislation providing for relief of

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The Administration has failed to make any new starts on multi-purpose power projects. It would appear they are dragging their feet in promoting negotiations with Canada relative to the Libby Dam site, a multi-purpose project they profess to favor. I feel that entirely too little consideration has been given by the Department of the Interior and the Army Engineers to Lee Metcalf's meritorious recommendation that a means to get this project rolling would be the construction of a low Libby Dam as preliminary to the construction of the authorized high dam when the international negotiations are settled.

The most grievous defeat for the people of Montana during this session was the Presidential veto of the resolution which would have authorized payment of \$5 million to the Crow Indians for Yellowtail Dam land and right-of-way, and thus cleared away the last obstacle to construction of this multi-purpose project which will mean so much to the industry and growth of our State.

I firmly believe that President Eisenhower was ill-advised when

he vetoed this resolution--a resolution with substantiating evidence on every point, a resolution which offered a means of treating our Crow brothers equitably, and a resolution approved by Congress, Montana's Governor, and local interests. We Democrats will do all in our power to see that this matter is settled at the earliest opportunity after Congress reconvenes in January, and in a manner safeguarding the interests of all concerned. The price to the Crow Nation must not be a cent less than \$5 million and no force or condemnation must be used to take advantage of the Crows. The three M's are not interested in and will^{not}/offer a price tag of \$35,000, \$50,000 or \$1,500,000 for this valuable resource.

In conclusion, I want to say again, that the record of the 84th Congress, as it affects Montana, is good. With a solid Democratic delegation from Montana in Washington with a Democrat in the White House and backed by a strong Democratic Administration in Montana, the record of the 85th Congress can be made better, the disappointments fewer.